HAPPY HOLIDAY

By MARY NELSON

"Happy new year!"

The cry echoed and re-echoed down the street as Penny made her way toward the bus stop. Everywhere about her people were light-hearted and gay and busily wishing their friends good fortune for the coming year. She buttoned her coat at the neck and turned up the collar. It was a bitterly cold day and she told herself she would be happy to reach home and stay in for the night. Let those with pioneer blood go out and stand in the raw wind down at Dayton Circle just to blow a silly horn at midnight ostensibly to usher in the new year.

Penny had always been known at home as a sensible girl with good common sense. She was proud of that reputation and now that she lived in the city alone she was more determined than ever to live up to it. She didn't want to become a sophisticated, worldly wise city girl. Thus, she summed up mentally, it was just as well she didn't.

"Going out tonight, Penny?"

The words interrupted her thoughts and she turned to greet Ruby, a fellow worker who was always going out with someone she called "Beanie." You could always tell the status of Ruby's romance by her mood. If she was exuberant to the point of being giddy, she was

"But her foot missed and came down on a sheet of ice."

going to see Beanie that night; if she was quiet and petulant, she was downright rude with a sarcastic twist to every remark she made, then they had quarreled.

Penny smiled. "No, I'm not, Ruby," she replied. Odd that she should feel such emptiness within her as she said the words. She noted Ruby's quick glance of sympathy and it irritated her. "I don't know anyone here," she defended herself. Then added curtly, "And anyway, I wouldn't dream of going out in such ghastly weather."

Ruby shrugged. "Oh, well, if you feel that way about it . . . happy new year, Penny." She hurried away before the wretched girl could make any response. "Now why did I act so nasty?" she asked under her breath. Ruby hadn't meant any offense—she was simply so wrapped up in her own little world that she felt sorry for anyone who had no Beanie to whom to belong. She was essentially a generous person and now Penny had deliberately hurt her.

As she stood in the middle of the sidewalk, angry and discouraged, she saw her bus speeding recklessly down the street and without another thought to anything else she hurried toward the corner. "Wait, oh, wait!" she called, running breathlessly. No one else was waiting, however, and he careened sharply off the curb, hurrying on his way. "Oh, dear!" She burst into tears at this new dissappointment and reached blindly for the curb.

But her foot missed and came down on a sheet of ice sending her into an astonished heap in the street.

For a moment she was too stunned to move. She heard footsteps hurrying toward her and managed to sit up dazedly. A man knelt down beside her but his face was a blur of features. "Take it easy," he admonsihed, placing an arm across her back. She tried to focus her eyes upon him and hadn't quite succeeded when he cried, "Penny! Why, Penny Lindsay! What in the world are you doing out here?"

And then everything cleared and she saw the handsome, blond features of a former school friend. "Oh, Alan!" Tears tumbled over each other in hasty exit. He helped her to her feet. "Gee, it's good to see someone from the old home town. I've been so doggone lonely," he told her, manipulating a handkerchief around her nose and eyes.

"I'm lonely, too," she gasped. "I've only been here a month."

"Say! What are you doing tonight? Anything?"

"N-nothing." Her heart skipped a beat in anticipation.

"Then why don't we go somewhere and talk over old times? Gee, I'm dying to hear some gossip about the Turners and the Mitchels and all the rest. Will you Penny?"

And Penny smiled happily this time. "Yes, Alan. Even this ghastly weather couldn't stop me from talking over old times with you."

★

As Interpreted

A young wife, wishing to announce the birth of her first child to a friend in a distant city, telegraphed:

"Isaiah 9:6" Which passage begins: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given."

Her friend, unfamiliar with the Scriptures, said to her husband. "Margaret evidently has a boy who weighs nine pounds and six ounces, but why on earth did they name him Isaiah."

★

Canada's Wedding Gift to Princess Elizabeth—This wedding gift of silver was presented by Prime Minister King on behalf of Canada to Princess Elizabeth. Learning that Princess Elizabeth had desired antique silver for a table service, selection of the silver was made, for Canada, by Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone. The service consists of a George I plain, two-handled siver cup and cover, made in London in 1720 by Paul Lamerie; four silver salvers, made in 1734 by Paul Lamerie; two single silver candlesticks; four silver candlesticks and three silver candelabra, reproductions of Paul Lamerie; 24 silver-gilt dinner plates; a case of table silver.

SHORT SHORT STORY

A Haven For Mannie

By ANNA E. WILSON

Wind, broad-shouldered Joel said, was just air in motion; all wind was the same. But Mannie, putting a tired hand to her head, pressing it against that spot of pain above her eye, decided that Joel must be wrong. There were all kinds of wind; but the worst was this wind that blew for days until it got into your head and burned a tight band about your forehead.

Joel came in to dinner. "It must let up soon, Mannie. It's never blown this long before."

"It'll never stop, Joel."

Joel's kind, blunt face looked worried. "We've got a good start here, Mannie. You like it here when the wind doesn't blow. Maybe running away isn't the solution. Maybe any other kind of life would have drawbacks too, Mannie. Seems like we might find a better way."

"You can't stop the wind, Joel."

When Joel had gone, Mannie

washed the dishes, the pain above her eye becoming each moment more unbearable. She reached for an aspirin, thinking of Joel, and stopped. It did no good to say the wind wouldn't blow tomorrow. there'd be the next year and the next.

Joel could sell the ranch and get work in a factory. She could see him in 15 years, his shoulders stooped, his hair thinner and the swing gone from his walk.

Joel wouldn't blame her, but he wouldn't be happy. Joel would never be happy anywhere away from the prairie. That was what made it so hard, so impossible for her.

She looked out and nowhere was there anything but sameness, nowhere except that old bluff, bordering Dead Man's canyon, a deep cleft sheltering a slough.

* * *

Roanie was surprised at being saddled so early in the day. He jumped as spurs dug into him and he swung around and headed into the wind. When Mannie came to the bluff she reined in Roanie and sat looking down into the canyon. It was narrow, steep with few footholds.

She slid down from Roanie and looked down to where a thin sliver of light, water, was barely visible — it was quiet down there — the wind could never reach you. She began to climb down, her feet slipping on the shale and stone. She rolled down the last 20 feet ignominiously.

She lay quiet on a tiny beach, relief seeping through her. The sun was warm and she relaxed and slept, like a limp rag on the sand.

When she woke clean-eyed clear-headed, the sun was slanting against the wall. It was time to get back. She could stand anything. She glanced upwards and caught her breath. Nowhere was there a single foothold.

She proceeded cautiously, examining the walls, coming at last to a shelving cave. Above the entrance was printed in rough letters: Windhaven.

Windhaven. Someone had been here before her. Someone had come here to escape from the wind, just as she had come.

She advanced farther into the cave and her foot struck a light object — a comb that some woman might have worn. If a woman had come here years ago, she must have had some way of getting back. Mannie hunted furiously.

It was simple when she found it. A rough hair rope, hidden by the side of the boulder, exactly the same color as rock and shale. She seized it eagerly and began to climb. She reached the rope's end and found it anchored securely by a huge rock, invisible to those above. She pulled herself over the rim of the canyon. She heard a nicker farther along and rounded a curve to find Roanie grazing.

She rode him with the wind behind her—but it was no longer a fearsome thing, something from which there was no escape but in flight. Windhaven—she had only to climb down the canyon to sleep securely on the small dry beach. Why they could spend whole days there, she and Joel.

Dampened salt can be restored by the addition of a little cornstarch. One teaspoon of cornstarch to six of salt is about the right proportion.

MOPSY by GLADYS PARKER

THIS CURIOUS WORLD By William Ferguson

MUTT AND JEFF—And What D'Yah Know? So Soon After Christmas By BUD FISHER